

October 8, 2009

Large commercial FM radio stations may soon have more company closer to them on the dial. H.R. 1147, the [Local Radio Community Act of 2009](#), would implement a 2004 Federal Communications Commission (FCC) recommendation that Congress eliminate a channel distance separation requirement for Low Power FM (LPFM) stations.

In a House Energy and Commerce Committee Communications, Technology and the Internet Subcommittee markup of the legislation Thursday, a bipartisan group of representatives expressed their support for the bill.

Said Rep. Mike Doyle (D-Pa.), "This legislation will bring communities across the country access to their airwaves."

"I am a big fan of low power FM [because] it empowers people who need a voice," added Rep. Lee Terry (R-Neb.)

In 1996, Congress passed the Telecommunications Act, which was aimed at opening up broadcast markets to competition through deregulatory measures. However, in 2003 all five then members of the FCC testified that the Act had created a decline in the overall number of radio station owners in the U.S.

Prior to that, the FCC had authorized the creation of LPFM's in 2000 in an attempt to bring more local programming to the airwaves. The Commission then granted licenses to over 800 LPFM

stations run by local governments, educational organizations, religious groups and community oriented organizations.

From the time these stations began broadcasting until today, they have been required by law to operate no closer than the third-adjacent channel away from the nearest full-power station on the dial. However, said Doyle, "The time has come to bring low power to the people."

Having now passed out of subcommittee, debate on H.R. 1147 will be taken up by the full committee at a date to be announced.

